

# Chapter 3. The Role of the Family in the Insurance Status of Children

## Introduction

This chapter examines the insurance coverage of children (aged 0-18) with a focus on how parental insurance status affects the insurance status of children. It also examines how the rate of uninsured children varies according to the gender and marital status of the head of the family. We also look at how families who do not insure all their children decide whom they will cover—examining factors such as health and age of children that are associated with the choice of whom to insure.

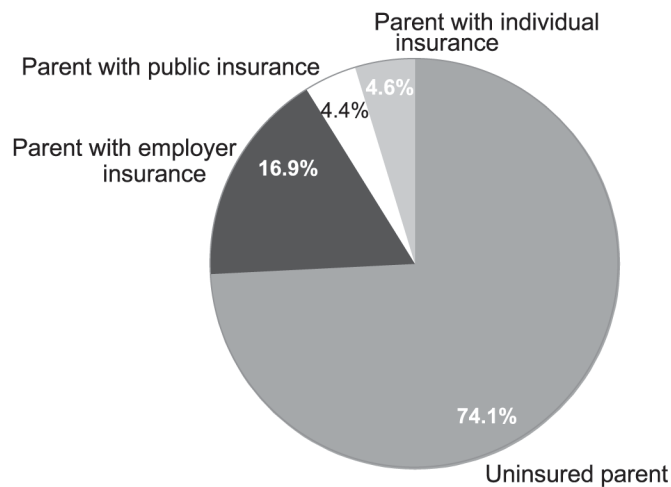
Children of insured parents are themselves overwhelmingly insured. Conversely, uninsured parents are much more likely to have uninsured children. And, three out of four uninsured children have uninsured parents. These patterns suggest that policies to insure adults may also be effective in insuring the remaining uninsured children. When families choose to insure only some of their children, they usually insure the youngest and the sickest children.

## Major Findings

### **Barriers to Coverage for Children:**

- Two-thirds of children (aged 0-18) with uninsured parents are uninsured, but only 2 percent of children with insured parents are uninsured. In addition, three out of four (74 percent) uninsured children—almost 86,000 children—have uninsured parents. This suggests that new policies to expand coverage for children might focus on the family as a whole.
- Children aged 13 and older are more likely to be uninsured than younger children, even when adjusting for other factors such as parents' insurance status.
- About 60 percent of uninsured children are school age—about 73,000 uninsured children in 2000. Thus, the schools might be a focus for outreach efforts to insure children.
- Most uninsured children are in families where all children are uninsured. However, families that insure one or more of their children, but not all of them, tend to cover the youngest and less healthy children.

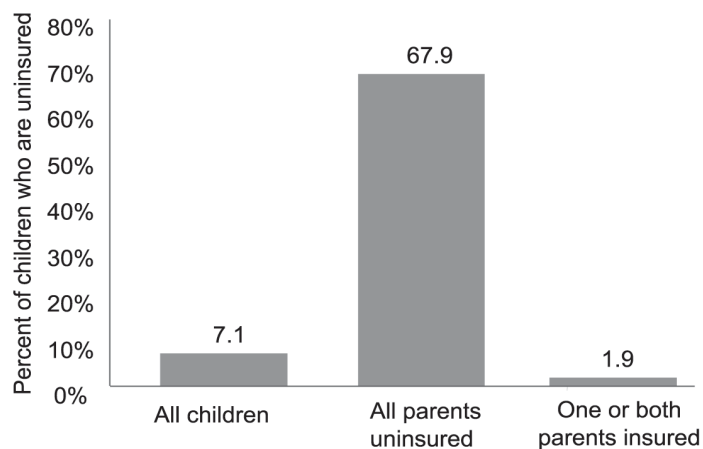
**Figure 3-1. Distribution of Uninsured Children by Parent's Insurance Status, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

A primary factor in predicting the insurance status of children is whether their parents are insured.\* Almost three out of four uninsured children have uninsured parents.

**Figure 3-2. Percent of Children Uninsured by Parent's Insurance Status, 2000**

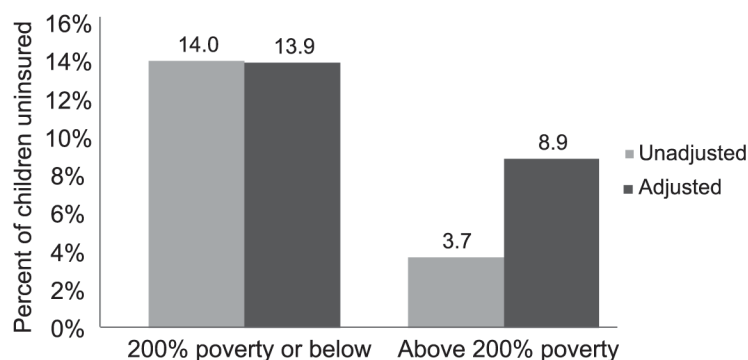


Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

Moreover, although 68 percent of children with uninsured parents are uninsured, only 2 percent of children with an insured parent are uninsured.

\*Note: Our analyses in this paper categorize legal guardians of children (such as a grandparent) as parents.

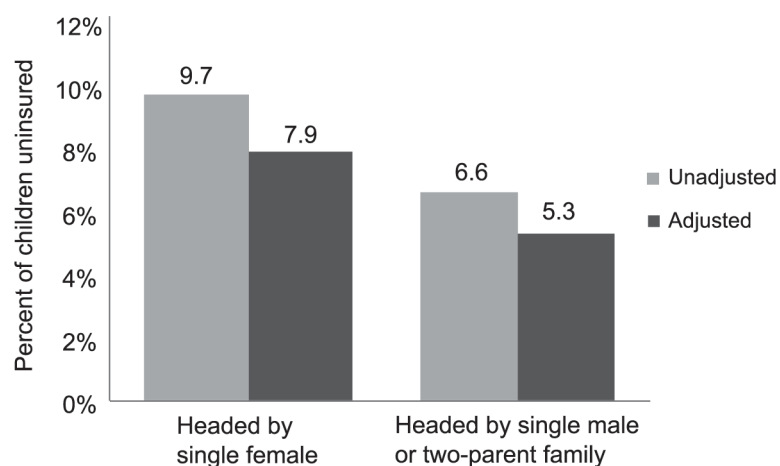
**Figure 3-3. Percent of Children Uninsured, Above and Below 200 Percent of the Federal Poverty Level, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Statistical adjustments are for child's age, whether parent is a single female, and parents' insurance status. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

Children are more likely to be uninsured if their family's income is 200 percent FPL or lower, even after statistically adjusting for other factors likely to affect insurance rates.

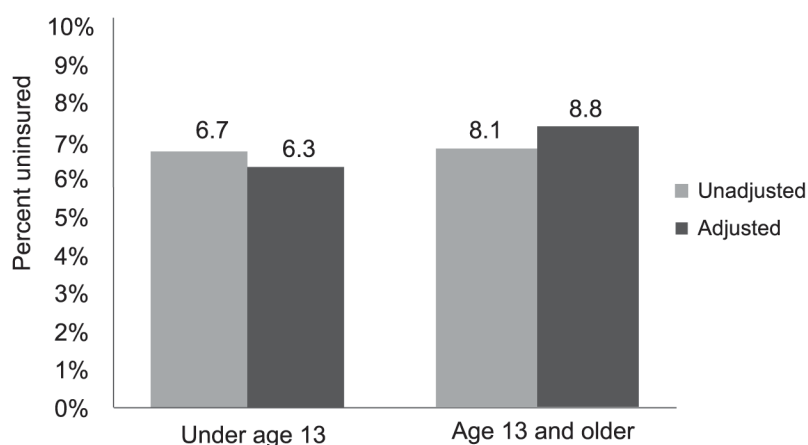
**Figure 3-4. Percent of Children Uninsured by Type of Family, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Statistical adjustments are for child's age, family income, and parents' insurance status. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

Children are also more likely to be uninsured if the family head is a single female. This is true even after adjusting for other characteristics, including parent's insurance status.

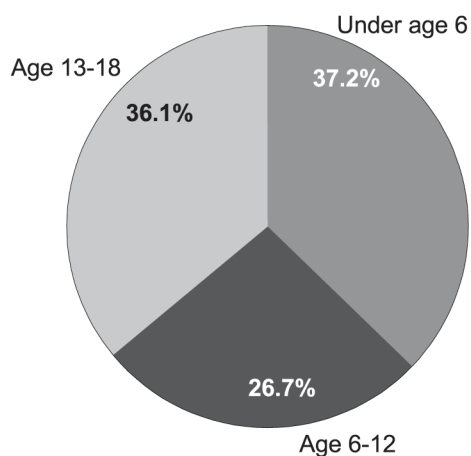
**Figure 3-5. Percent of Uninsured Children by Age, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Statistical adjustments are for family income, whether parent is a single female, and parents' insurance status. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

Older children are more likely to be uninsured, even when adjusting for other factors, including parent's insurance status.

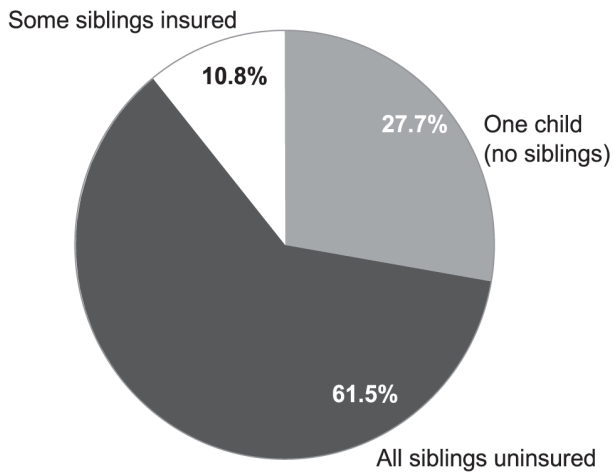
**Figure 3-6. Distribution of Uninsured Children by Age, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey.

However, the number of uninsured children is relatively equally distributed among infants, preteen school-aged children, and teenagers. About 60 percent of uninsured children are school-aged children, so using the schools for outreach would target a majority of these uninsured children.

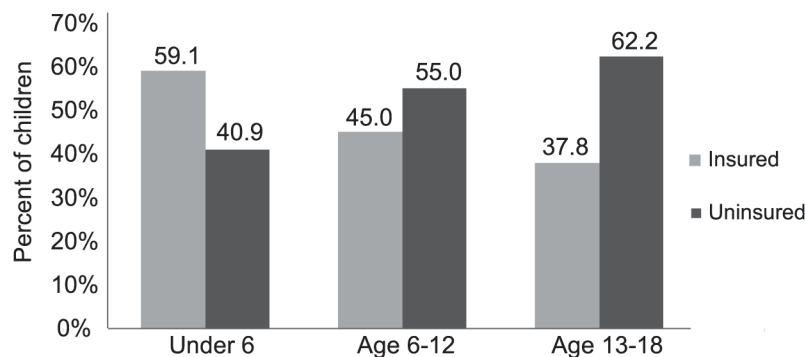
**Figure 3-7. Distribution of Uninsured Children by Sibling's Insurance Status, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

Most uninsured children are in families in which all children are uninsured.

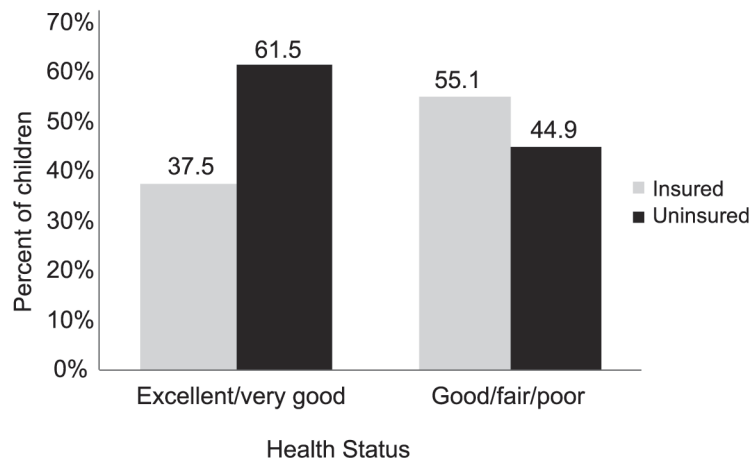
**Figure 3-8. Insurance Status of Children in Partially Insured Families by Age of Child, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey.

In families with only some children insured, the percent of uninsured children increases with the age of the children. In other words, families that do not insure all their children are more likely to insure the youngest children.

**Figure 3-9. Percent of Children Uninsured in Partially Insured Families by Health Status of Child, 2000**



Source: 2000 Washington State Population Survey. Data refer to children aged 0-18.

In families with only some children insured, children who have better health are more likely to be uninsured. This suggests that families who do not insure all children may choose to leave the healthiest children uninsured.